



Thanks to the support of parents and players and the hard work of league organizer and Coach Benjamin Cruse, Little League has returned to the South End. I was pleased to participate in Opening Day ceremonies held in May in Hyland Park.

State Should Pay Fair Share

Major property tax reform is unfortunately some years away. But, for the first time, the legislature seriously considered reimbursing towns fully for tax-exempt colleges, hospitals and state-owned buildings. The state pays a much lower tax rate for these properties known as Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILOT). Hartford and Wethersfield each have numerous tax exempt buildings—the Capitol and Legislative Office



Building, the state Department of Labor on Folly Brook Drive and the Department of Corrections on Wolcott Hill Road in Wethersfield, to name just a few.

This low rate of reimbursement means higher local property taxes. The rapid decline in state tax revenues this year put this proposal on hold for now, but I believe the call for full funding for

PILOT properties will be even stronger as more towns struggle financially, and is critical to the effort to lower your property taxes.

MDC to Provide Job Training

One of the biggest construction projects underway in the Hartford region is the Metropolitan District Commission's sewer and storm drain separation project, a project costing more than \$1 billion which will take 15 years to complete. Together with other members of the Hartford legislative delegation, I worked for the adoption of Special Act 08-9, which requires, among other provisions, the MDC to appropriate \$200,000 for training residents of member municipalities in job skills that will qualify them for employment in the different trades that are needed to complete all phases of this massive project. I hope that this is the first of many significant investments we make in job training for residents where this project will be undertaken.

What We Did in Health Care

- ◆ Expanded "Money Follows the Person" Medicaid program to allow up to 5,000 seniors to enroll, so that Wethersfield and Hartford seniors may receive care in their own home or that of a relative caregiver.
- ◆ Passed the Connecticut Health Care Partnership to allow municipalities, small businesses and non-profits to voluntarily join the state employee health insurance plans (vetoed by the governor).



Dear Neighbor,

The 2008 legislative session was as difficult as any when the state's economy slows and revenues decline. The decision to not change the budget means that the opportunity to address some important needs will be delayed.

Despite the worsening economic picture, I am happy to report that I was successful in securing funds for important projects in the 1st District. In this newsletter I want to share information about issues I worked on during this past session, and some victories won working together with the great number of organizations helping to strengthen the communities of Hartford and Wethersfield.

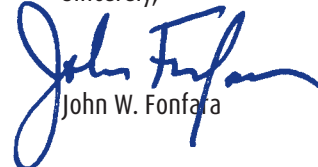
This year I worked closely with Representatives Minnie Gonzalez and Kelvin Roldan, Julio Mendoza of the Spanish American Merchant's Association (SAMA), and Crecencio Custodio of the Asociación de Bodegueros to pass important legislation on the Women, Infants, and Children Program. I am particularly proud of my work with SAMA, Mi Casa, the Institute for the Hispanic Family, and the Charter Oak Health Center to help secure millions of dollars in state funds for small business loans, façade and streetscape improvements, security cameras, and improved youth and health services, which together are steadily transforming Park Street and the surrounding community visually, culturally, and economically.

In Wethersfield, working with State Representative Russell Morin, the Village Improvement Association and the Wethersfield Beautification Trust, I was able to secure \$115,000 for gateway improvements and an additional \$25,000 for continuing the horse and carriage rides in Old Wethersfield. And, with an unwavering commitment to complete the removal of Wethersfield Cove as an overflow point for the MDC treatment plant, together we are helping to preserve the charm of Connecticut's oldest town.

In Hartford's Southend, working with the leaders of the new South Hartford Alliance, Paul Mozzicato, Vinnie Carbone, Al Marotta and Ralph Arena, we were able to obtain funds to help improve public safety, make streetscape and façade improvements and manage property along Franklin, Wethersfield, Maple, and New Britain avenues.

There are different but no less real challenges facing the two communities I represent, and in each there are many dedicated people and organizations working hard everyday. I am proud to be the voice advocating for them and for you each day as your State Senator.

Sincerely,


John W. Fonfara

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I'm proud to
represent the
1st Senate District:
Hartford
Wethersfield

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I participated in the ribbon-cutting for the new Institute for the Hispanic Family, made possible by \$2 million in state funding. With me, among others, are Archbishop Henry Mansell, Representative Kelvin Roldan and Mayor Eddie Perez.

LEGISLATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Reducing Energy Costs

The cost of energy is severely affecting all of us. Driving our cars, heating our homes, turning on lights, even the food we buy for our families, all are affected by the price of oil. As oil prices have increased, gasoline and heating oil prices have doubled. Natural gas prices often go up with the price of oil, and much of the increase in the cost of electricity is being caused by the rise in oil and natural gas prices.

Increasing demand in other parts of the world, instability in oil producing countries, and speculation by investors are all global reasons for the rising cost of energy. As Senate chairman of the Energy & Technology Committee, I have been working to find solutions which will help lower your energy bills.

In 2005, we passed a law which encourages the development of on-site electric generation, especially by businesses that use large amounts of electricity. The Energy Independence Act is helping many businesses throughout the state remain open and competitive. It is also helping to lessen the demand for electricity, a key factor affecting all of our electric rates.

Last year, we passed a major energy bill which, for the first time, focused on reducing electricity use when the cost to generate electricity is extremely expensive. In the coming months in Hartford and Wethersfield, “smart meters” will begin to be installed in many homes. These meters will be the first step in allowing you to shift your electricity use to a cheaper time of the day or week, helping to lower your electric bill. All-electric cars will be able to power up at night when the price of power is the cheapest.

In other areas, we have established a \$10 million oil conservation loan fund to allow low-income households to replace old, inefficient boilers and furnaces, and incentives to find new ways to produce bio-fuels to replace gasoline or heating oil.

The high cost of energy is extremely difficult for many of my constituents, and the results of the hard work of my committee take more time to reach us than we would like, but I have and will continue to invest my time as your State Senator to lessen our dependence on worldwide factors, and give us the tools to begin to lower our energy bills here at home.



YOUR STATE SENATOR JOHN FONFARA

Priority Number 1 – Quality of Life

Without question, the number one concern of many of my Hartford constituents is quality of life. Loud music, speeding cars, pocket bikes, drug dealing and loitering are the types of complaints I hear, by far, the most often. My number one priority this year was to secure \$1.5 million in state funding to create, for the first time ever, a standing unit in the Hartford Police Department to focus exclusively on the problems that disrupt life on your street and in your neighborhood.

Despite the strong support of the Senate President for this program, the unfortunate decision not to do a new budget has left us without the funding needed to put these officers on the street this year. Until we enforce the city’s quality of life laws and ordinances swiftly and repeatedly, the residents of Hartford will never be able enjoy their homes or neighborhood as they should. The quality of life of all of the neighborhoods I represent has been and will continue to be my number one priority.

Protecting Hospitals in Hartford

Hartford Hospital and St. Francis Hospital do much more than provide health care for the Greater Hartford region. Both hospitals play critical roles in helping to stabilize the neighborhoods where they are located, helping to drive the community alliances SINA and NINA, employing thousands of people by offering entry level positions with opportunities to advance, and investing millions of dollars in their facilities.

The UConn Health Center has proposed a plan to increase the number of beds at John Dempsey Hospital in Farmington, threatening the economic viability of Hartford and St. Francis hospitals and their role as leaders in their neighborhoods and the region. I believe if an expansion plan were to be approved, the impact on these hospitals—and therefore on Hartford and Wethersfield—would be immeasurable. I will continue to oppose any effort that would weaken these two critically important institutions.



I recently presented a check for \$115,000 to town officials and members of the Village Improvement Association and the Wethersfield Beautification Trust for the Wethersfield Gateway Project to replace dilapidated guardrails and make improvements to the Marsh Street exit off of I-91. (Left to right) Representative Russell Morin; Rae Ann Palmer, assistant to the town manager; Mayor Andrew Adil; Lisa Leonard, Village Improvement Association; Carol Adil, Wethersfield Beautification Trust; myself; Seymour Adil; and Town Council members Matthew Forrest and Jim Clynnh.



Members of the Society of Latin American Firefighters and the Third Age Initiative of Leadership Greater Hartford join Society President Edward Casares, neighborhood leader Clorinda Soldevila and Mayra Lozada in accepting a check for \$350,000 from me for the complete renovation and restoration of Lozada Park.

Support for Reentry Services

Far too many offenders being released from our prisons end up in Hartford shelters with no support services to help them get a job, find a place to live or stay away from drugs. One of the most effective ways to reduce crime is to help offenders being released back into our communities to not offend again. Reentry services help people make the transition to living in the community successfully.

Without services such as counseling to support reentry prior to release, programs that include supervision, job training and placement, and substance abuse counseling after release, the likelihood of re-offending is very high for this population.

The Criminal Justice Reform bill that I helped to pass this year increases the number of placements for both reentry and alternative to incarceration diversionary programs. I am strongly committed to increasing support for these critical programs, helping people succeed in the community and keeping our neighborhoods safe.

Environmental Justice Law Passes

Waste treatment plants, incineration facilities, solid waste and ash landfills, bulky waste facilities and power generation plants are unavoidable realities of our modern society. These facilities, which serve a region, are concentrated in a handful of our cities and towns in Connecticut. We know that dirty air can cause respiratory and other health problems, affecting those living in surrounding towns, as well as the community where a facility is located.

Working closely with the Dr. Mark Mitchell and the Environmental Justice Coalition, we succeeded in passing landmark legislation to ensure that any new major polluting facility seeking to locate in an environmentally stressed community (such as Hartford,) must submit and receive approval for a public outreach plan, consult with the chief elected official and the environmental community regarding a Community Environmental Benefit Agreement, and include plans to offset the environmental impact of the new facility.

Hartford may no longer have working farms or large open spaces, but we have as much right to protect our health and to have clean air, land, and water as any other community. With this new law, we have begun to make that happen.